



Original Article

## Policy Implementation Performance in Developing Countries: The Study of Uganda among East African Countries

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This policy paper examines the effectiveness of policy implementation in developing nations, with a focus on Uganda among the East African nations. The performance of Uganda's policy implementation in comparison to other East African nations is highlighted. The World Bank's "Country Policy and Institutional Assessment" (CPIA) for the year 2021 served as the foundation for this desk research. One-way analysis was used in the analysis. The results showed that the East African nations performed better than the global indicator. Kenya earned the highest mean policy implementation score among the three East African nations (3.7539683 on a scale of 1 = low to 6 = high). Kenya came in first, then Uganda (3.4484127), and Tanzania (3.5119048). However, the inconsequential F statistic showed that there is no difference in policy execution between the three states., i.e., the means are equal. There is a general consensus that Uganda has strong policies, but the execution is appalling. The country's policy implementation is better than the average index among developing countries, despite the claim that it might "hold some water." The three nations together with a few others make up the East African countries; while Uganda's performance is lower than Kenya's, it is higher than Tanzania's.

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## INTRODUCTION

The failure of programs in developing nations is becoming more widely recognized (Hudson et al., 2019). The researchers point out that it is uncertain how to assure effective policy creation and execution in chaotic, complicated systems. According to World Bank Governance Indicators, the majority of sub-Saharan African nations struggle with policy implementation (Conron et al., 2011). A limited fiscal space, political factors, and a lack of cooperation across various government departments are some of the causes, according to the Bank. According to UTS International (2011), Uganda has solid policies and programs, but there are implementation issues. According to CUTS, technocrats in both the national and municipal governments lack motivation to put plans into practice. According to CUTS, technocrats in both the national and municipal governments lack motivation to put plans into practice. It is noted that politicians frequently meddle in the affairs of technocrats, who in turn are hesitant to properly carry out plans since there is a general lack of credibility.

All actions involved in carrying out a piece of legislation are referred to as policy implementation (Knoepfel et al., 2011). Performance in the execution of policies depends heavily on political-administrative processes. Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) define policy implementation as the phase in which the government puts an adopted policy into practice in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation or policy action. At this point, the execution of the relevant policies is formally delegated to the various government departments and agencies.

The policy does not operate autonomously. After legislation is passed, policy implementation does not happen in a straightforward, automatic manner

(Rabin et al., 2007). No matter how well-intentioned, well-formulated, or broadly supported a policy is during the adoption stage of the policy process, until someone or some entity actually implements it, it will not start to alter the behavior of a target population or address a particular public issue. Notably, a wide range of issues may restrict the ability to implement policy. Numerous elements frequently come into play when implementing a certain policy. However, from a policy's conception to its execution, a number of issues may need to be taken into account. Nevertheless, any element could lead to a policy's implementation failing or working poorly. As a result, everything that is related to the execution of policies needs to be investigated (Linder et al., 1989).

Mustafizur (2022) said that in poor nations, agencies frequently struggle to produce the data that nations require for the implementation of policies due to a lack of human resources, financial constraints, and access to contemporary data creation methods. As a result, policymakers find it difficult to analyze the effectiveness of their decisions and track the execution of their policies.

According to Kalebo (2021), policy implementation in Uganda can be viewed from the top-down or bottom-up, with either approach having benefits and drawbacks. (Palumbo & Calista, 1990, as cited in Paudel 2009) The top-down paradigm prioritizes implementation over considering the perspectives of the recipients. This has drawbacks for the idea of implementation, which is concerned with how well implementers' and target groups' activities align with the objectives reflected in administrative power (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1980). The actors involved in the implementation of programs are the main emphasis of the top-down perspective. Therefore, the method faces the difficulty of ignoring the fact that policy implementation is bound to run afoul of a mismatch between the goals

of the beneficiaries and the actions of the implementer

The beneficiaries are evaluated from the bottom up, taking into account the grassroots' perspectives. Implementation is reliant on the understanding and evaluation of people at the local level, whose strategy makes use of local knowledge (Paudel 2009). The centre has received input on this perspective that has been implemented from the outside in. Implementation is not greatly influenced by the central level. This perspective may have the drawback of not sufficiently taking into account the fact that the execution of policies should take into account power relations (Paudel, 2009). A downside of bottom-up policy implementation is that this could potentially result in policy implementation failure.

The case study Okalebo (2021) presents on the inability of policy to execute Uganda's prohibition on plastic bags is painful. The study points out that policy implementation could stagnate in the absence of a distinct goal and precise objectives. As a result, there must be clear instructions for how to implement the policy in relation to its aims and end goal. Another essential requirement for the success of policy implementation is the causal hypothesis. A clear evaluation of the factors that led to the creation of the policy is required, and it should be kept in mind and taken seriously by all parties involved.

The implementation failure of Uganda's ban on polythene bags was evaluated in Okalebo (2021). It was a government strategy put in place in Uganda to educate the populace about environmental issues. The National Environment Statute of 1995 (Statute No. 4 of 1995) governs the overall coordination of the legal ban on polythene bags. The goal of the policy is to stop the misuse of polythene bag disposal, which contributes to pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, soil deterioration, and other environmental risks. The policy would guarantee environmental sustainability, which is jeopardized by the abhorrent way that polythene

bags are disposed of. The goal of the policy was to forbid the use of polythene bags, known locally as "Buveera," for packing and carrier bags, as well as their manufacture, sale, and importation.

Due to their careless disposal, polythene bags pose a threat to the environment, particularly in urban areas. The ordinance was approved by the Ugandan legislature in an effort to keep Buveera from endangering the environment. Buveera prohibition policy implementation stopped. Buveera is still being used to increase population, which severely degrades soil and pollutes the environment. Manufacturers and environmentalists are arguing back and forth about the prohibition. The political establishment lacked the motivation to forbid buveera use. The president of Uganda was cited as saying that he opposes the prohibition and instead emphasizes recycling, which portrayed this (URN, 2018). The position of the political apparatus is unquestionably detrimental to the execution of policies.

Decision-making and policy formation seem to be the easier tasks for many poor countries, especially in Africa; nevertheless, execution is a more difficult challenge (Uganda Development Management Policy Forum [UDMPF], 2022). There has been little progress in achieving socioeconomic transformation and bettering the material circumstances of the majority of the poor in many African nations, including Uganda. Instead, there have been modest but significant advancements in entrenching participatory politics, election management, and institutionalizing the power to make decisions. Although several measures of Uganda's economy show growth, UDMPF notes that these advances do not correspond to the actual living standards of the country's larger society. There are complaints regarding the dismal track record of policy execution, whereby socioeconomic initiatives are poorly implemented.

There aren't many researches that have thoroughly investigated the causes of and remedies for such low levels of policy implementation in developing

nations. Some academics have discussed the best ways to revitalize public management and policy, even when the implementation of policies no longer serves as the central concern. There is important, reliable knowledge regarding how to implement policies. While there has been some modest to moderate progress on a number of fronts, there hasn't been much done to put policies into action. In other cases, it may be necessary to look in unexpected places in order to be guided by a larger logic of intellectual development in order to make sense of the pertinent scholarship on the execution of policies in developing nations. In summary, the process of implementing policies continues to be relevant for significant management and policy issues. Under whatever names are now in vogue, implementation research is active and vibrant. The Uganda Development Management Policy Forum [UDMPF] (2022) raises several queries in this regard. Why has Uganda's capacity to implement policies not kept pace with the country's modest success in institutionalizing decision-making power and creating outstanding policies? What can be done to enhance the way policies are implemented? Although the UDMPF's policy brief makes an effort to address these issues, policy execution in Uganda is still quite poor.

### **THEORETICAL UNDERPINS**

From the standpoint of the traditional theory on policy implementation, theoretical foundations support the idea of implementation. Putting a policy's goals and objectives into practice is known as policy implementation. The action plans and administrative input that make up policy implementation's operational process and end results are defined from the standpoint of classical theory. It identifies the normative sorts of actors that must undergo a relational analysis in order to make it easier to determine what causes a policy to succeed or fail. To understand the successful operation or failure of a policy, it demonstrates what is involved at various stages and the interactions between the actors (Knoepfel et al., 2011).

While implementation and compliance may be grounded on the causal theory, the processes must also be carefully planned throughout the policy's implementation phases. Thus, continual valuing would be possible. The degree of dedication and expertise of the policy implementers is yet another crucial factor in policy implementation. If implementers are not dedicated and competent, policies will not be successfully implemented. Socioeconomic issues, which are frequently uncontrollable external elements (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1980), also have an impact on how successfully policies are implemented. In this sense, socioeconomic difficulties are a sure fire way to have an implementation fail. Poor socioeconomic circumstances make implementing policies difficult. The idea offers justifications for academic success or failure in implementing policies. According to Lamb (1984), the Mazmanian-Sabatier project will make an important contribution to the libraries of people who are particularly interested in the challenging process of successfully implementing a wide range of public policy programs. This study's objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation in developing nations, with a focus on Uganda among the nations of East Africa.

### **METHODS**

The researcher and practitioner participated in the most intricate and sophisticated aspect of a public policy process—the study of policy implementation. The 'policy life cycle' phase actually establishes a direct connection between the public actors of the political-administrative arrangement (PAA), the target groups, the end beneficiaries, and third-party groups (third parties positively and negatively affected third parties). Secondary data were employed in the study (World Bank, 2021).

The study used the CPIA's indicators below of development:

- CPIA building human resources rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA business regulatory environment rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA debt policy rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA economic management cluster average (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA efficiency of revenue mobilization rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA equity of public resource use rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA financial sector rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA fiscal policy rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA gender equality rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA macroeconomic management rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA policies for social inclusion/equity cluster average (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA policy and institutions for environmental sustainability rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA property rights and rule-based governance rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA public sector management and institutions cluster average (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA quality of budgetary and financial management rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA quality of public administration rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA social protection rating (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA structural policies cluster average (1=low to 6=high)
- CPIA trade rating (1=low to 6=high).

**RESULTS**

The analysis entailed finding 2021’s average performance (3.15707672) among all the developing countries. Then One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of performance of the following: the East African Countries with the rest of the developing countries; Uganda with the rest of Kenya and Tanzania, the leading economies in the East African Region.

**Table 1: Policy implementation among the three main East African countries in 2021**

Factor	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
Kenya	3.7540	0.3236	21
Tanzania	3.4484	0.4991	21
Uganda	3.5119	0.4318	21
Total	3.5714	0.4380	63

Table 1 shows that among the three East African countries, Kenya had the highest mean policy implementation score (3.7539683, measured on a scale of rating 1=low to 6=high). Kenya was followed by Uganda (3.4484127) and lastly by

Tanzania (3.5119048). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was further carried out to find out if the above means were statistically different and statistically significant.

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	1.0919	2	0.5460	3.03	0.0557
Within groups	10.8050	60	0.1801		
Total	11.8969	62	0.1919		

*Bartlett's test for equal variances:  $\chi^2(2) = 3.5818$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.167$*

The insignificant value for Bartlett’s statistic (0.167, *Table 2* confirms that there is a homogeneity of variances among policy implementation scores among the countries.

The insignificant F statistic (3.03) tells us that policy implementation does not differ between the three states, i.e., the means are equal.

A further test was carried out to assess how Uganda fared in policy implementation compared to the mean score of 3.15707672 of policy implementation among developing countries.

**Table 3: One-sample t-test of policy implementation in Uganda**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	F
Policy implementation	21	3.5119	0.0942	0.4318	3.3154	3.7084
<i>t</i> = 3.7660						
<i>H</i> <sub>0</sub> : mean = 3.15708						
degrees of freedom = 20						
<i>H</i> <sub>a</sub> : mean < 3.15708		<i>H</i> <sub>a</sub> : mean = 3.15708		<i>H</i> <sub>a</sub> : mean > 3.15708		
<i>Pr</i> (T < t) = 0.9994		<i>Pr</i> ( T  >  t ) = 0.0012		<i>Pr</i> (T > t) = 0.0006		

We can see that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean test policy implementation score (3.511905) and the international population value of 3.15708 as the *p*-value in the *Pr* (|T| > |t|) row (under *H*<sub>a</sub>: mean!= 3.15708) is less than 0.05 (i.e., based on a 2-tailed significance level), evidence that the mean 3.511905 is different from the hypothesized value, 3.15707672 of a score of policy implementation among developing countries.

Since Uganda’s score mean (3.511905) of policy implementation is higher than the hypothesized value (3.15707672) of a score of policy implementation among developing countries; we can conclude that Uganda is doing fairly in policy implementation among developing countries.

**DISCUSSION**

The study assessed the performance of policy implementation in developing countries, with special emphasis on Uganda among East African countries. The average performance of policy implementation among developing countries, East African countries, and Uganda was determined. ANOVA was used to test if the differences in policy implementation among developing countries, east

African countries, and Uganda were significant. The policy implementation does not differ between the three East African states. However, Uganda’s performance was found to be lower than Kenya’s but higher than that of Tanzania, which does not affirm the widely held view that Uganda has good policies but their implementation is dire.

**CONCLUSION**

Overall, policy implementation performance among the East African countries (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania) was found to be higher than average among the world’s developing countries. The study also found that among East Africa’s leading economies (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania), Kenya was performing best, followed by Uganda and, lastly, Tanzania.

Therefore, if what is widely said that Uganda has good policies, but the implementation is dire is true, then policy implementation among the hordes of countries that Uganda showed to beat by a huge margin, the situation must be truly depressing. Be it that the assertion might “hold some water”, the country’s policy implementation is above the average indicator among developing countries. Although Uganda’s performance is below Kenya’s,

it is higher than Tanzania's—the three countries, along with some others forming the East Africa countries.

### Recommendations

The study found that Uganda is trailing behind Kenya, her counterpart in the East African Region, and one of the top 10 most developed countries in Africa. However, Uganda is doing better than average in policy implementation among the developed countries. The study recommends that the country make an effort to be at least on par with Kenya.

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